✣ Pre/face ✣

LITTLE DID I KNOW

What happens when you assume? You make an ass out of u and me. Old saw

In the battle between good and evil we are winning.
Button bought at a gas station outside Camp Lejeune U.S. Marine Corps base, North Carolina, May 2003

Guatemala is our big success story!
Attaché to the U.S. Embassy in Caracas, Venezuela

To treat Arendt's statement . . . that revolutionaries . . . "were fooled by history, and they have become the fools of history" . . . as an axiom of the new world order . . . is to willfully confuse the triumph of the forces that militated against Third World revolution with the idea that this triumph was just or inevitable. At the limit, it is to argue that anyone who believed in or fought for a revolutionary utopia is morally responsible for the often dystopian result of the failure of this project: the Revolutionary here is not just a fool, but a criminal, whose own undoing was his crime. Carlota McAllister

KNOWING AND BEING BETWEEN POSTWAR GUATEMALA AND AT-WAR UNITED STATES

This is a book about reckoning: how it is troubled by suspicions of duping and foolishness, and how it is saturated by loss and hope. People make war to achieve certain ends, aka what is desired or hoped for, and when war ends, when it is over, they continue to struggle, if by other means. Through these experiences they assume different identifications. In other words, if people make war, war also makes people. Such assumed identities — which can look two-faced or false — destabilize assumptions, what we think we know. Perhaps this is why many Guatemalans talk about *engaño* (duplicity) and *babosadas* (foolish things) to describe their experience of civil war and its end/s.

In December 1996 the Guatemalan government and the guerrillas of the Guatemalan National Revolutionary Unity (URNG) signed a peace treaty ending a war that began in 1962. In 2005 the UN peacekeeping force, MINUGUA, pulled out, ending the peace-processing period. “Now we’re just another third world country,” said a Guatemalan friend of mine. This book is about the in-between, about an end (the postwar) that is not quite a beginning (of peace) and about the essential but highly fraught process of reckoning. Reckoning can mean to count, figure up; to measure possibilities for the future; and to settle rewards or penalties for any action. It promises clarity, an accounting or balancing out. However, the specific ways in which the Guatemalan war was carried out, through the counterinsurgency’s targeting of hearts and minds, the embodiment of horror, and multiple forms of *forcivoluntaria* collaboration in the violence, destabilize this promise. While these special effects of war are particularly acute in Guatemala, I hope that exploring this case will shed light on more general experiences of the insecurity of knowing the assumptions of identity.

Working in Guatemala in the postwar period, I’ve found many people questioning their assumptions, what they thought they knew. This leads many to question who they were and are. They are pondering what to make of the individual and collective experiences of consciousness raising, of organizing, and of opting for or against projects—like land reform and transforming a government rooted in ethnic and class exclusion—that seemed to promise liberation from exploitation, immiseration, racism, and injustice. For many this was the end, or goal, of their activism. But they are also reckoning with the devastation caused by the military state’s scorched-earth counterinsurgency campaigns that killed and wounded hundreds of thousands and swept up millions of people as victims *and* as perpetrators. Depending on one’s perspective, this violence ended either the threat of or hopes for radical change. To measure possibilities for the future people ask: What was it all about? what kind of person was I? am I? What kinds of people surround me? Is resistance futile? What exactly do we resist? Of course, Guatemalans are not the only ones to ask such questions.

In Guatemala, in nonviolent social movements and in armed combat, both with and against the state, people experienced intense sociality, their lives placed in the hands of others. In many cases this trust was well placed. In others, people strove to be trustworthy but were acted on—sometimes by an interest in reward or improvement, at other times by threats and violence, or by even less tangible forces that now lead them to speak of possession and exorcism. Some couldn’t help themselves when they *delataron*, turned someone in, or inflicted harm themselves. But others wholeheartedly meted out death, sometimes because they thought they were defending their own and others' lives. A clear divide between armed combatants and civilian casualties, between one's own beliefs and army or neoliberal propaganda, between the State and the Population, especially as close to a million men became active state agents through the Civil Patrols, became blurred and shape shifted. Very few Guatemalans escaped some sort of collaboration in the violence and its aftermath. Responsibility becomes difficult to assume.

Time passes. War has ended. Even the postwar draws to a close. There's a new generation. For some, the balance sheet has been drawn up, the winners and losers declared. The book should be closed. Yet the simultaneous personal and political struggle remains. And that is where this book opens. How do you trust others, yourself, what you know (or thought you did) for sure? How do you work on new and shifting terrain? How do you reckon in order to act? Are there shared values among humans? Or is there an essential divide among kinds (*genos*) of people—indigenous, nonindigenous, oligarch, peasant, intellectual, man, woman? Are they (we) always duping and duped—corrupt, co-opted, deceitful, bought, and sold? Is there hope for a more just future, for some improvement in the lot of the struggling majorities? Or is to hope simply to *meterse en babosadas*, to get involved in foolish things? These suspicions are simultaneously everyday, enmeshed in the smallest calculations of lived sociality, and horrifyingly existential, constantly threatening to engulf one in the dark night of the soul.

And not only in Guatemala do discourses of *engaño*, *babosadas*, and *manipulación* (duping, foolishness, manipulation) circulate as commonsense assumptions about how the world works. In El Salvador (Binford 1999, Zilberg 2007), Peru (de Gregori 1989, Yezer 2007), Argentina (Gordillo 2004, Valenzuela 1983), Colombia (Taussig 1992), postsocialist Europe (Borneman 1997), Cambodia (Hinton 2002, 2005), Rwanda (Mamdani 2001), South Africa (Comaroff and Comaroff 1999), the United States (Jackson 2005, Kick 2001, Rajiva 2005, Ricks 2006), and elsewhere, duplicity—the sense that the world available to our senses hides another face behind it—is a site of intense affective and hermeneutic investment in the aftermaths and ongoing experiences of war and violence. Simultaneously, notions of reckoning, transparency, accountability, and audit circulate with the promise of fixing singular identifications, like victim or perpetrator. But uncertainty about assumptions in the epistemic sense—what you can take for granted that you know—is lashed to nervousness about assumed identities—what you can take for granted about who you or others are.

In the highland Guatemalan town of Joyabaj, Quiché, a former civil patroller remembers the training he received from the army "as a campaign of penetration . . . until it was engraved in our heads . . . 'a guerilla seen is a guerilla dead' and 'for the guerrilla neither bread nor tortilla'" (Remijnse 2002:128). In nearby San Bartolomé Jocotenango patrollers were drilled with phrases like "A los que se metieron en babosadas los engañaron [those who got involved in foolishness were duped]; those who were organized brought the problems; they are the pure thieves" (González 2002:432). In 2005 Dr.Héctor Nuilá, a former guerrilla and secretary general of the URNG political party, said, "We are really seeing the effects of the army's slogan 'muera la inteligencia!' [death to thinking!].[1] They killed anyone who thought, our best minds. People ask why Guatemala has no Nelson Mandela, and I have to remind them that there were no political prisoners here. They killed everyone, and now it's almost the reverse of Descartes: I don't think, therefore I am." "Is it normal?" asks an anguished urban activist. "Is it normal for people to turn on each other? People who know you, who you've worked with for years, to suddenly accuse you of corruption? Is it normal to betray each other?"

In turn, the anthropologist might ask, *cui bono*? Who benefits from distrust? from the belief that "the Revolutionary is not just a fool, but a criminal, whose own undoing was his crime" (McAllister 2003:366)? Who benefits? A vital query, but just as vital is to question the question itself, to ask what it assumes about power—i.e., there is someone behind the scenes, pulling the strings. We'll see that addressing "two faces" often means asking more than one question.

"Subjection is . . . a power *assumed by* the subject, an assumption that constitutes the instrument of that subject's becoming," says Judith Butler (1997:10). Subjectivization through our names, sex, gender, ethnicity, nationality, or class is deep seated. These are identifications assumed in the sense of taken on, inhabited. In hindsight they may come to feel false (an assumed identity), but even if we blame them on great and powerful forces like Patriarchy, Capitalism, or History, it's hard to name individuals hiding behind the curtain and pulling our strings, benefiting from our manipulation. We assumed them our selves. Indeed, where would we be without them? But some identifications *are* the result of plans and networks, the end-goals of actual people. "Economics are the method," Margaret Thatcher said, "but the object is to change the soul" (in Harvey 2005:23). "They've had a bad cassette put in their heads. Our job is to change the cassette," a Guatemalan army colonel told me in 1985. "The Guatemalan army did enormous physical and material harm to Maya Guatemalans and their way of life, it also and equally deliberately, destroyed certain Maya capacities for political action" (McAllister 2003:370).[2] So, how do we know when our knowledge, soul, hearts, minds, and capacities for action are precisely the target of well-funded and mass-marketed counterinsurgency? These identifications are also assumed, incorporated. They come to feel perfectly real. Can we tell which is which? What is the we that might tell? Is self-possession — the etymological root of authenticity, defined as that which really is what it is represented to be — possible? A lot hangs in the balance.

These are very large questions, dazzling, even paralyzing. Trying to avoid such a fate, I approach them sideways, through the ways in which people in postwar Guatemala and the United States deploy stories (*contar* in Spanish) about *engaño*, doubleness, fooling, and duplicity. Perhaps this is similar to Walter Benjamin seeking a method to confront the phantasmagoria of the commodity spectacle which he chose to examine *through* the small, discarded object, *via* the arcade as a marginal site of amusement, *by* traversals (2001; see also Abbas 1999, Taussig 1999). How are Guatemalans reckoning with similarly huge and freakish entities like the state or the postcolonial racism condensed into the stereotype of the two-faced Indian? How are they accounting for horror, anger, guilt, disillusionment, sadness, history, memory, as well as hope and the process of assuming or taking on (*asumir*) responsibility and new identifications? I'll suggest it is through traversing the relations between knowing and being and the simultaneous transformations in both. This is a path that the form and content of this book seek to duplicate, so please don't expect a big unveiling of the Truth or that I'll get to the crux of the matter for more than a moment before moving on. That's in part because the word "crux," or the essential point, is two-faced, simultaneously meaning "a puzzling thing." And in part because there is an unstable, unreachable variable at the heart of the object of study — be it victim, perpetrator, Mayan, indigenous, nonindigenous, the war itself, or interests and the nature of power — that shape-shifts just as it seems legible.

An important moment for knowing and being in the end or closure of Guatemala's war was the accounting rendered in 1999 by the UN's Commission of Historical Clarification (CEH), which not only quantified victims and blame, finding state forces responsible for 93 percent of the violence studied, but qualified the military state's end-goal as genocide against the Mayan people. While such claims were advanced in the early 1980s and dismissed as *babosadas*, or conspiracy theories, by the state, this was a special form of knowing, of things going *with* saying. The CEH lashed together international law with the rule of UN-warranted experts with *testimonio* (the storytelling, or *contar*, of those who lived it) to make powerful knowledge. The report became a new actor in the trials of strength (Latour 1987) over the meaning of the war, and it changed what could be assumed about ethnicity, race, and class. In conjunction with many other actors and actants it continues to influence postwar assumptions of identity. While contextualized within twelve volumes of history, statistics, analysis, and quotations, the genocide ruling has given weight to particular claims about victims and perpetrators and impacted understandings of what the end of war will entail. For example, it has allowed activists to swerve around the army's self-granted amnesty, which cannot cover crimes against humanity, to bring charges in national and international courts, and it has revivified struggles for reparations, individual and collective. Some felt vindicated that the special trauma of racism was finally highlighted, while others fear it has emphasized race war when the end-goal of many who were struggling, indigenous and nonindigenous, was political economic restructuring. It is hotly contested whether people were killed because they were Maya or because they challenged the structures controlling land and labor. Given this book's interest in two faces, it will often answer questions posed as either/or with both/and.

My end-goal is not to produce horror that there may be little solidity in knowing or in subjectivity; I do argue, however, that horror is a productive experience. Instead I invoke the Virgin of the Assumption, patron of both Guatemala City and Joyabaj, the small town where I have learned so much about reckoning, to accompany us through this book. Also known as the Virgen de Tránsito, Our Lady of Contingency and Constant Transformation, in loose translation, she helps us explore how—in our specific locations and in our loci of relations—we reckon and act. This is no time for paralysis!

This time it's personal.

I was pushed to write this book on reckoning with duplicity/*engaño* by hearing the term over and over again in postwar Guatemala, and also by my own experiences of transformation via duplicity. Upon reflection I see it was incubated both in twenty-plus years of fieldwork and by a long series of discoveries that I myself had been conned, hornswoggled, and bamboozled by a whole set of assumptions—things I, as a middle-class, white, midwestern North American had taken at face value. (You might call my little *Bildüng* "Gullible's Travels.") Heteronormative monogamy; a sunny suburban sense that all was right with the world; race, and class privilege . . . as I grew up and put away childish things this standard packaging took on a different, more propagandistic look.

Perhaps my biggest discovery was finding out I was a *gringa*—a North American outside the United States (Adams 1999, Nelson 1999). This was occasioned by the U.S. invasion of Grenada while I was studying in Spain. At first I couldn't figure out why the United States would be taking over a small city in Andalusia (Granada). Confusing Grenada and Granada sounds like a stupid joke, but, pathetically, I truly and sincerely did. Living in Spain in the early years of the flamboyant filmmaker Pedro Almodóvar, where news, lectures, and opinions about U.S. policy in Latin America were powerfully articulated (especially horror at U.S. support of the anti-Sandinista *contras* in Nicaragua and of murderous regimes in El Salvador and Guatemala), was a classic consciousness-raising experience. Why, after all my years of schooling, didn't I know that in 1954 the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) had overthrown Colonel Jacobo Arbenz, Guatemala's democratically elected president?[3] Why didn't I know that over a quarter of a million people had been killed or "disappeared"[4] since then and more than a million displaced, in a country of eight million? I'd been swallowing whole what the Jesuit Ignacio Martín-Baró, murdered in San Salvador by U.S.-trained troops, called "official lies" (1989).

As my assumptions about my national identity began to change, I realized I wasn't the girl I used to be—I was assuming, or taking on, a new identity. Acknowledging how personal the political is can be most unpleasant. Like Neo in *The Matrix*, confronting a countertruth to his existence, I shuddered and tried to turn away as my deeply held sense of self, of being on the right side in battles between good and evil, revealed an uncanny double, as I realized the face in the mirror might look very different to a Guatemalan peasant or an Iraqi national. How to reconcile these two faces? How to acknowledge power, responsibility, and guilt without assuming those are the only faces? How to avoid being duped into believing that resistance is futile,[5] and keep hope alive that economic, political, and social change is possible? And how to resist such a fluid power—one that acts through us without our knowing it? How to refuse to fix a singular enemy—because, as Donna Haraway says, one is not enough but two is too many (1991)?

And even later, when I felt I was in the know about how official stories had made me believe that U.S. foreign policy was disinterested, undertaken for the good of the world, I was still not immune from duping (little did I know!). As I became a fieldworker in Guatemala, an author, activist, teacher, and finally a professional anthropologist, I always thought I was expressing my true identity, although, granted, it wasn't the same identity as the girl who rode horses with 4H and was president of the high school Thespian Club. So it was a bit of a shock when one of my brothers put me on to *Class* (1983) by Paul Fussell, whose persnickety prose I read with glee, recognizing all manner of other people's unconscious expressions of class. The delight drained away on page 90, however, where there is a picture of *my* TV set and a precise definition of *my* intentions: "drained of some of its nastiness by Parody Display—indicating that you're not taking the TV at all seriously by using the top as a shelf for ridiculous objects like hideous statuettes, absurd souvenirs, and the like.” When *I* put the grotesque ceramic hula girl (already an ironic present from my anthropologist sister) on my TV, I thought I was expressing my own creativity and refusal to be duped by the culture industry’s outpost in my home. Duped again!

This book is a rumination on this unhappy feeling of finding that what seemed to be an expression of the inside may actually express something coming from the outside. Exploring assumptions of identity raises the unsettling sense that we know not what we do. Why, after all, do drug trials have to be *double* blind? As Freud suggested in his theory of screen memories, not only are there malevolent forces out there keeping me from being in the know, but I’m even fooling my self.

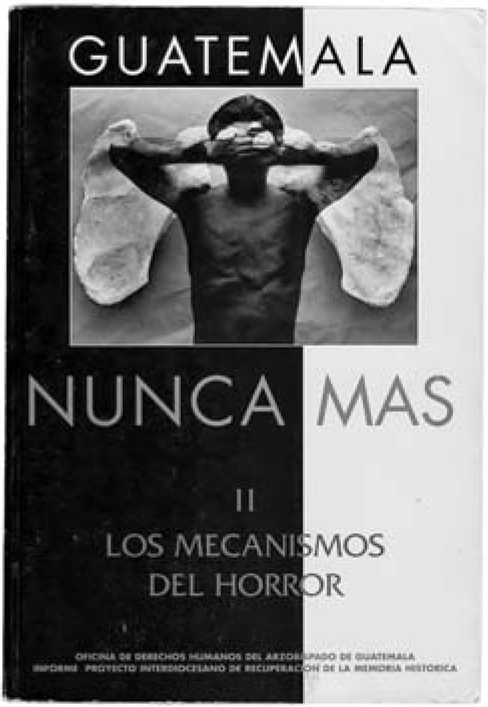
The very notion of duplicity suggests the possibility of and inspires the desire for singularity, unveiling the real face so two become one, or a balance, where two cancel each other out into zero. The massive death and widespread destruction of the war in Guatemala make this desire into far more than a theoretical quandary. The need to account for what happened, for those responsible to *asumir responsabilidad* for their actions, for acknowledgment and reparations is a constant undercurrent in the news and conversation—even as gang activity, political corruption, and *fútbol* make the headlines. Behind the apparent normalcy that makes the U.S. embassy claim Guatemala as a success story[6]—economic and military sanctions lifted, a succession of elected politicians taking office, some of whom were avowed revolutionaries, public protests and scathing critiques of the government filling streets and newspaper columns, growth in productivity—is another face. For many it is never-ending pain, fear, and the certainty that the horror could return again at any moment. For others it is remorse, guilt at what they’ve done and/or fear of retribution via the courts or supernatural entities.[7] Many also see *poderes ocultos*, hidden or occult powers, behind the civilian front of the government. While my focus is Guatemala, I would suggest that the difficulties of reckoning amidst seemingly ubiquitous duplicity and under the threat of bodily harm may be the conditions of possibility for political action and knowledge in our age. Remember that the singular word “knowledge” in English is a double entendre in Romance languages: *conocimiento* and *sabiduría* in Spanish, *connaissance* and *savoir* in French. Michel Foucault says,

> It’s a question, then, of understanding once more the formation of a knowledge [*connaissance*], that is, of a relation between a determinate subject and a determinate field of objects, and of grasping it in its historical origin, in that “movement of knowledge” [*savoir*] that renders it pos-

> sible. Everything that I have occupied myself with up till now essentially regards the way in which people in Western societies have had experiences that were used in the process of knowing a determinate, objective set of things while at the same time constituting themselves as subjects under fixed and determinate conditions. (1991:70)

This book explores the "ethnographic fact" that many Guatemalans use duplicity as an act of interpretation when they talk about the war—saying they were duped or that they duped others. But it also stems from when I myself sort of knowingly collaborated in duplicity. I began working in Guatemala in 1985 as a researcher on other people's projects.[8] In a way I was a prosthetic, extending the reach of people, both North American and Guatemalans in exile, who could not themselves go to Guatemala for fear of their lives. I think my naïveté was good for the job. Twenty-two years old, Caucasian, just out of college, long-haired, wearing tourist clothes, I would walk up to army bases with my traveling companion and innocently ask to speak to the commander. But both in the highlands, where people would stop talking if a child came by to stare at the gringas—for fear the kid was a spy—and in Mexico City, where Guatemalan exiles could still be disappeared, I began to learn about the bodily discipline that living clandestinely demands and the deep fog it creates around attempts to be in the know (and not only for gringas). Counterinsurgency violence and the counterstrategies developed to survive it implanted terror at very deep levels.[9] Guatemalans knew from experience that a careless word, especially one uttered near an outsider, someone who hadn't learned the techniques of secrecy in her very body, could mean death or, even worse, torture for them and others. It came home to me again how deeply assumed clandestinity was when I interviewed a former guerrilla member in 2001, five years into the postwar. We had a great conversation about election plans and other work the new URNG party was doing, but when we started talking about his past he started coughing till it got so bad we couldn't continue. He told me his body itself would not let him speak about the time he spent underground.

These silences, interrupted sentences, and cultivated secret keeping are hallmarks of the clandestine life. Is this the duplicity of the less powerful, a weapon of the weak (Scott 1987)? Do the very swerves and evasions that sidestep a suicidal direct engagement contribute to the stereo (double)-type of the subaltern as two-faced, untrustworthy? Do the reverbs of this stereotype in turn help produce the colonial ambivalence, epistemic murk, paranoia beyond reason that is greater than the sum of its parts, irreducible to a cost-benefit analysis, and that may explode into the excessive violence



"Never Again: The Mechanisms of Horror." Cover of the report of the Guatemalan Archbishop's Office of Human Rights on the Recuperation of Historical Memory, Volume 2 (REMHI). The wings of the angel are the bones of a body exhumed from a massacre site in 1997. Photograph by Daniel Hernández-Salazar. Used with kind permission.

of genocide? In a sort of dialectics of deception, does state power produce clandestinity and also reproduce itself through these fantasmatics of threat? In turn, must these effects be hidden away via the "mechanisms of horror" (REMHI 1998) of paramilitary death squads, secret detention centers, clandestine cemeteries, murdered witnesses, and "plausible deniability"?[10] And aren't the lives of those who "man" these parastatal sites similarly marked by silences, interrupted sentences, and cultivated secret keeping? In turn, what networks of accountability might magically transform the face of state impunity into one of vulnerability—as a dead body that was proof of one thing (we can kill whomever we want) morphs into evidence at a war crimes trial?

These were not questions I was grappling with in 1987, when I was both acted on and acted with these weapons of concealment, secrecy, and masquerade. As I increasingly assumed the identity of gringa-in-relation-with-Guatemala by becoming a researcher, that is, a medium through which others did their work, I was more and more positioned in-between—where I remain to this day. As a gringa, and like any anthropologist, I live, feel, and work between field site and home, between Guatemala and the United States. This book might be described as similarly suspended between two faces: the terror and fascination of conspiracy theory and the hopefulness and perhaps naïveté of optimism of the will. I tell the following story, at the risk of being dubbed an enemy combatant, because it further explains my stakes in the fraught questions of knowledge and its relation to self and to action.

Owing to the culture of secrecy engendered by the ongoing war and to my role as a relative newcomer to the Guatemala scene, I was unaware in 1986, on my second trip to Guatemala to research the army's counterinsurgency resettlement areas, that there had been an acrimonious split in the Guatemalan left and that I was working with people identified with one side of the divide. I also didn't know that because of my association with them my next research job fell through. I only knew that I'd rushed to finish a project on the Development Poles (published anonymously by CEIDEC in 1988), quit my secretarial job, and was ready to go back to Guatemala when word came that my services would no longer be required. No further explanation was forthcoming. So I cried a lot, then went back to temp jobs and solidarity work, saved my money, and landed a freelance journalism gig to return on my own. In Mexico City a Guatemalan friend cryptically told me that I might be able to repair the damage, and he'd try to set me up.

I had invested a great deal in my assumed identity as a medium—a good researcher and trustworthy ally—so I jumped at the chance to go back to Guatemala with my links to Guatemalans reestablished. The job that came through, however, was a team project consisting of two Mexican women and two gringas overseen by Guatemalan exiles to research alternative development strategies in Mexico for a consortium of European NGOs (nongovernmental agencies). I longed to be in Guatemala, but this was my assignment, and I was living and working with Guatemalans, commuting between Chiapas and Mexico City, so I could hardly complain. I was also learning lessons I would not appreciate till later about the day-to-day effects of clandestinity as, even in our shared house and in the relative security of living in exile in Mexico, its rules held firm. Four months after we began sharing our lives, I ventured to ask my two roommates in the privacy of our kitchen how they'd gotten involved. The conversation came to a sudden halt. They looked at me in shock and said, "You should know never to ask about that!" Our relationship cooled for a while afterward, and I never broached the subject again. Many accounts of wartime and postwar Guatemala stress the double silencing of government cover-up and opposition clandestinity, but I want to stress here, for readers unfamiliar with how it feels and also for those of us who have begun to relax and forget, how very difficult it was to be in the know.

In the meantime, our team grew increasingly frustrated at the lack of resources provided for the project. Only much later did we realize the bulk of them had been filtered through us to Guatemala for activities that could not be openly funded. I'm pretty sure some of the Europeans were aware that our project was a rather elaborate front. But our team was not. Did our very ignorance, our sincere belief, make the project "work"?[11] So there I was, two-faced, both duped and duper. And, just as I sincerely believed then, there's no guarantee that I'm not equally duped now. And perhaps duping you?

Another warning. This book is a sequel to earlier work on Quincentennial Guatemala (Nelson 1999) that focused on 1992 and the commemoration of the five hundred years since Columbus—although I find, to my surprise, that the past weighs more heavily now than it did then. Here I follow the torquing of identifications that emerged out of the event of 1992, with the rise of the Mayan movement and peace treaty negotiations. *Caveat Emptor*. The schlock horror film *Scream II* warns that one of the rules of horror films (like "Don't say, 'I'll be right back' 'cause you'll be dead for sure!") is that there's always a sequel, but that sequels always suck.

After writing my dissertation and getting an academic job, I returned to Guatemala in 1998 to find stories of duplicity running rampant, especially about the Maya, a term first applied to cultural rights activists but now far more generalized. Unsympathetic ladinos, aka nonindigenous,[12] *and* indigenous people (not an isomorphic category with Maya; see note 2) claimed that the Mayan activists were duping themselves with make-believe—a pathetic amalgam of new age exotica, ritual recipes culled from old anthropology texts, and a sad desire for real identity. They were deracinated urban people with no ties to the authentic indigenous of the rural highlands and therefore two-faced. However, many commentators claimed that no real "Indians" existed there either, what with the effects of five hundred years of colonialism, the ethnocide of the war, the recent massive penetration of Protestant sects,[13] and so many people going to the United States and coming back gringoized, if they returned at all. Not only were the Maya duped, according to these widespread commentaries, but they were also duplicitous. They were tricking their naïve supporters—especially the gringos, but also the poor benighted indigenous people who were being talked into curricular and legal reforms that would set them back decades, even centuries.

I wanted to explore these charges and the struggles over authenticity, but I was also interested in the many ways people were talking about the past as a site of duplicity—enacted by the left and the military state, among others—*and* about the new postwar state as itself two-faced—a democratic mask hiding the ongoing power of the military and economic elites. As I was exploring duplicity in postwar Guatemala, my "own" country went to war, after falling prey to nepotistic election fraud, called by some a coup d'état, that has led to an increasingly secretive and repressive government, self-censorship in the press and academia, the disappearance of suspected subversives, torture-murder of detainees by soldiers and private contractors who were "just following orders," and a far too literal "war of the cross"—openly called a crusade by the selected leader waging it but not paying the price. Little did I know I'd be telling the story of the Guatemalanization of my homeland's insecurity.

Wondering if the planet can survive this transformation makes me quite personally invested in reckoning how the assumptions of identity can articulate with political action and the possibilities for justice and reconciliation, despite not being in the know. There are those who attribute the current disarray in the Euro-American left, unable to staunch the right-wing *Anschluss*, to the very set of theories I will draw on here. There is a call for stronger convictions to match those of the right and the free market in their march to victory. It is a pressing project, in Guatemala and elsewhere, to reckon with a certain failure, to account for what happened and what is happening. This entails exploring what induces some people to stay home, keep their heads down, stay out of *babosadas*, even as their interests seem clearly at stake, or, alternatively, what leads others to step out of the everyday rhythms of their daily lifeworlds and risk trying to change their milieu—whether it's heading for the hills to engage in guerrilla struggle or just going to a demonstration. By what means is one possessed to act and, post (f)acto, how do we account for them?

A small, local example points to some of the complexities of this query. I used to teach at a small college in Portland, Oregon, where a number of students worked to mobilize participation in the anti–World Trade Organization (WTO) protests planned for Seattle in November 1999. There were teach-ins at which experts laid out careful arguments for the democracy-destroying and ecology-devastating effects of WTO policies and debates in which pro and con arguments were aired. Articles were published in the school newspaper, attractive fliers and pamphlets were distributed, and testimonials from charismatic victims of these policies were proffered. As interest grew on campus it had a snowball effect. It started to feel like going to Seattle was *the* cool thing to do. Plus it was made ridiculously simple. Rides, places to stay, and food were all arranged; all you had to do was show up. Even so, I wasn't planning on going until my students en masse informed me that class was canceled and I'd better accompany them.

Now, I was utterly convinced intellectually of the evil inherent in the

WTO and could rattle off any number of documented cases of its perfidious effects. As a veteran of many protests I didn't have to be convinced of the strategy or of the need for taking political action in general. Yet my attendance, like that of many of the students, was undertaken, if not in a fit of absentmindedness, then at least rather serendipitously and at the last minute. But the action itself, despite the cold and the wet and the lack of sleep, the clouds of tear gas, the storm trooper police tactics, and the fright turning to thrill of successfully facing down a bulldozer sent to dislodge us, was one of the more remarkable experiences I've had of human solidarity and the embodi/meant[14] of "THIS is what democracy looks like!" For many of us it was transformative, morphing a somewhat casual attention to globalization into a site of committed and passionate attachments. Boy, did those losers who stayed home feel bad when we returned, armed with our amazing tales, which thus continued the contagious effects of the experience. Who knew at the time that it would become the touchstone of the worldwide anti–corporate globalization movement and spawn books, movies, and later reverential comments like, "Wow! You were in SEATTLE?" Of course, this mobilization lasted only a few days outside our usual schedules. It did not involve the threat of being expelled from school or of losing our jobs or our lives, and it achieved its ends/goals of shutting down the WTO and garnering global media coverage. Best of all, no one was seriously hurt. If it had gone badly would some of us who went because we believed, but mostly because our friends were going, recall it as something we were duped into doing? Would we blame those friends rather than the cops for things going awry? Would it be their fault for not foreseeing the risk? This raises Pascal's old puzzle—do I do something because I believe? Or do I believe because I do it?

And what happens when you stop believing? How is the doing commemorated? In turn, what if it is power's fondest hope that you stop believing? What if hopelessness is counterinsurgency's most powerful weapon? In addressing these questions, this book, I hope, provides some clues for theory and action, but it is only one of many accounts and is not the truth of Guatemala or of the United States. That is constantly being assumed and produced by all of us.

A last confession about my own faces of duped, nonduped, and duper and about how this book is tied to my interest in keeping my job. It germinated in the preparation of my tenure case and the demand for a second project that at least looked to be well under way. "You wouldn't actually have to write it," said my kindly mentor, "but isn't there something you could say you were working on?" Reviewing my writing, I found, to my surprise, that while I seemed to be addressing various issues—the popularity of horror films, the Rigoberta Menchú "scandal," the state at its margins, and malaria, which I considered my real next project—what I was "really" concerned with was duping. Aha!, I thought, I will write a duplicitous book proposal about duping. Little did I know. The longer I took on this assumed identity (in the sense of a false one), the more it came to seem real. I sincerely wanted to write it, making assumed identities both the how and the what of this book.

To introduce my methods, what I know is, of course, also limited by the conditions of production, including increasing institutional demands, work speedup, the temporal vampirizing of e-mail, and family responsibilities that made it impossible to do long-term, all-at-once fieldwork. I have visited the highland majority-indigenous town of Joyabaj, which forms the setting for part of this book, annually since 1999, but I have not lived there full-time, nor can I speak or understand Maya-K'iche'. I learned a great deal, but this is not an in-depth ethnographic study of the town. That has already been written by Simone Remijnse as *Memories of Violence: Civil Patrols and the Legacy of Conflict in Joyabaj, Guatemala* (2002), and the REMHI and CEH reports also describe events in the area. I would also direct the reader to important in-depth works on nearby towns by Carlota McAllister, Matilde González, Charles Hale, and Abigail Adams and to recent studies of the war and postwar by Richard Adams, Santiago Bastos, Manuela Camus, Ricardo Falla, Susanne Jonas, Beatriz Manz, Juan Hernández Pico, Luis Solano, and Arturo Taracena, among others.

This book is about milieu, what is in-between or what circulates, like Guatemala's patron saint, the Virgen de Tránsito, aka the Virgin of the Assumption, under whose sign I write. It is less about a place than about the deployment and assumption (taking on) of modes of understanding such as to reckon, or *asumir responsabilidad*; *engaño*; ends; the postwar; to settle accounts, or *cobrar facturas*. It is also about assumptions in terms of the taken for granteds that structure our lifeworlds, what Lacanian psychoanalysis calls the *nom du père*, or name of the father, emphasizing the patriarchal undergirding—to which colonial racism must be added—of the supposed normal. These include progress, transparency, risk and insurance, race improvement, and audit culture. *Nom du père* is a multifaced pun that can also mean the no of the father, that is, the apparati that repress us, that resist change—from without and within, and also *les non-dupes errant*, the non-duped err. Slavoj Žižek says that those in the know are lost precisely because "as one 'in the know,' he [*sic*] is caught in transference" (1989:42). It is a call to humility.

WHAT AWAITS

Chapter 1 begins with festival in Joyabaj, a space and time in which it's easy to get lost in the crowd, presided over by the Virgin of Assumption/s. It is peopled by masked beings mimicking a powerful colonial stereotype, The Two-Faced Indian, a figure that will accompany us through the first half of the book. In *bailes*, dances that simultaneously commemorate the past and may foretell the future, these masked men are doubled over yet also rebel. We'll also meet a man who assumes the identity of two-faced from working simultaneously with the church and with the army during the war. Now he labors for development and Mayan rights. Here we begin in earnest our traversing of the assumptions of identity. Chapter 2 more fully describes the context or milieu of postwar Guatemala and explores some of the identities assumed there. We will navigate the dual forms of counterinsurgency I gloss as the wars of the sword and of the cross and look at specific cases of reckoning—settling penalties for actions—in the struggles of people like Helen Mack, Jennifer Harbury, and Esperanza León for justice in the deaths of their family members. I am also interested in the decisions people make about the appropriate sites of struggle at this time. Chapter 3 asks why so many postwar Guatemalans like to go to horror movies. Are they dupes of the global culture industry? Maybe. But I'll also argue that there is something about horror films, full as they are of embodiment, of beings that are not what they appear (heroes morph into victims, victims transform into killers, girls act like boys and vice versa), and their resistance to ends (a sequel always lurks) that might shed light on commemoration and collaboration, reckoning and duplicity in Guatemala.

Chapter 4 explores charges leveled by the U.S. anthropologist David Stoll that Nobel laureate Rigoberta Menchú Tum, Guatemala's most famous citizen and a spokeswoman for the dispossessed, is duplicitous: a liar and con artist, an Indian giver. Why did Stoll's accusations create such a scandal, even though he does not dispute many aspects of her story? Why were some people around the globe so quick to assume they'd been duped? Accusations of duplicity position the accuser as nonduped, a position, I'll admit, I find attractive. But do the nonduped err? If we do, then what? Chapter 5 returns us to the carnival atmosphere of *fiesta*, where we began with the *bailes*, to wander through a variety of sideshow exhibits of stereotyped (stereo as double, not mono) Indians. Here I look in most detail at how people are defining authenticity, postwar indigeneity on the ground, and the workings of the assumptions of that figure of myth and legend, The Two-Faced Indian.

The second half of the book turns to duplicitous states and sovereign power as two-faced—hiding behind a curtain, it can be revealed as actual people with a plan to control us, yet it is also bigger than that, magical, a great and powerful traumatic excess. It is a State and simultaneously ecstasis. I begin chapter 6 exploring a familiar stereotype bouncing off the indigenous and sticking to the state, which is also two-faced. We'll traverse a range of suspicions about what lies behind the front of the postwar state and the modes by which Guatemalans and others try to unveil them. Chapter 7 explores the state's other face, how power may work "behind the backs of or against the wills of even the most powerful actors" (Ferguson 1994:18) by comparing the state's role in two wars—one to counter the insurgency of popular and revolutionary uprising, and the other to wipe out the plasmodium that causes malaria. Here the state appears Janus-faced with its simultaneous right of death and power over life. As I do throughout the text, here I focus on the assumptions of identity as both producing and produced by milieu and interests, both of which mean "that which lies between." In the last chapters I swerve back on these accounts to explore the notion of reckoning more generally—the memory work, the disavowal of assumed identities, the post facto readings that lead to charges of duplicity or claims of being nonduped, and the ludicrous task of the anthropologist, who attempts to "settle accounts, to determine [at least textually] the rewards or penalties for any action." I engage how reckoning itself arises from another double. The "modern fact" that accounts can *be* balanced derives from the practices of double entry bookkeeping, but Mary Poovey (1998) suggests this practice may be a con, duping us in the very act of performing transparency. Reckoning also arouses millennial hopes of justice and of aligning the faces into a singular identification of a truly *post*war Guatemala, fed by fervent desires for peace. Hoping, always, to veer away from dead reckoning, I'll sum up these attempts at historical clarification through "audit culture." This will entail attending to both the apparent balance promised by zero and to its horror: the null, the void, the end of genocide. Despite everything, that project has come to naught, and Guatemalans of many kinds are collaborating to end it as a possibility, reckoning with war and terror to learn "the secrets of [their] termination" (E. V. Walter in Sluka 2000:16).

In writing this book I am experimenting with what might be called a Pink Freud methodology. By this I mean I concatenate attention to political economy (pinko) with Freud, Lacan, and the film and gender theory they have influenced, mixing in a strong dose of cultural studies, particularly the focus on popular culture—thus the reference to rock stars Pink Floyd—all combined with a sensitivity to the queer (more pink), aka gender, sexuality, desire, fantasy, and perversion, which etymologically means swerving, troping, or trans/acting. I take rumor and conspiracy seriously as ways of being in the know as well as “high” theory, “low” culture, and much that is in-between.

There’s a lot to be reckoned with in this not-yet-postwar planet, and great danger of possession by the evil twins, gloom and hopelessness.[15] The jokes and movie analyses are invitations to consider and engage with the in-human—both what is in us, yet what most horrifies us (Feldman 1995:245)—but via a contemplation (muse) that also amuses (to pleasantly distract), so we can keep going. Some might think the only appropriate mien before the horror of what has occurred in Guatemala is shock and awe. These are justified and important emotions and form one of the faces of this book. I feel them, and I will probably evoke them in this account. However, they are certainly not the only face Guatemalans turn to their experiences.[16] I also fear that a demand for such a singular, unmoving response may swerve into self-righteousness and pessimistic functionalism while proffering the enjoyments of vicarious martyrdom. In any case, such a face is too static for my purposes. I’m not sure it can reckon with how things work close to thirty years after the worst of the genocide. And shock and awe, no matter where deployed, is a form of counterinsurgency. It is meant to freeze you, incapacitate you, convince you there is no alternative. As Mikhail Bakhtin said, “Things are tested and reevaluated in the dimensions of laughter, which has defeated fear and all gloomy seriousness . . . [objects are liberated] from the snares of false seriousness, from illusions and sublimations inspired by fear” (1984:376). If pain is one way the state acts on the body, then finding pleasure where we can is a form of resistance. In turn, pleasure’s embodi/meant is a serious way to be in the know. It is a counter-counterinsurgency hermeneutic. In the twenty-first century’s “war of the worlds” (Latour 2002) we need many arrows in our quivers, including both shudders of horror and gales of laughter.

Because this book is interested in the in-between and in playing with clear-cut divisions between content and form and one chapter and another, readerly traversings swerve through short intertexts that read films and novels to elaborate on the conceptual milieu.[17] Each intertext lays out the theoretical questions I will explore in the following chapter, and the first, “Those Who Are Transformed,” is the most overt conceptual guide. One reason I chose this form is to focus on the ambiguity of accounting. I try to account, in the sense of reckon, with identification in postwar Guatemala, but to do so I rely on many different accounts or narratives, stories, and image repertoires that articulate, if momentarily, understandings for Guatemalans, myself, and hopefully you. Žižek warns of a danger in playing on the resonance between high and mass culture: “How to elude the notion of some common *Zeitgeist* as its interpretive device,” positing some level that will be revealed—like resolving two faces into one? I will try to follow his Lévi-Straussian suggestion of playing them against each other “to interpret alternately one with the help of the other” (1992:113), a method also known as dialectical montage. This helps us remember that neither high nor low culture may be quite so powerful or so powerless as they first appear. Whether or not it’s the message, pop culture media (media: an intervening thing through which a force acts or an effect is produced) are important modes for the assumptions of identity—even in apparently isolated hamlets of highland Guatemala. Juan, the eighteen-year-old son of Esperanza León, a war widow, gently mocked me when I said I feared for him crossing the U.S. border. He told me he wasn’t worried about his upcoming trip. Pointing to the image on his black T-shirt he said, “I am the son of Bruce Lee!” And, perhaps possessed by this spirit, he did indeed make it across safely.[18] This is my wish for all of us traversing the end/s of war.